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RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 ASTANA 002071

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN AND PM CHRISTOPHER PETRONE

E.O. 12958: 11/19/2029

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [KZ](#)

SUBJECT: U.S.-KAZAKHSTANI MILITARY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS SUPPORT
MODERNIZATION OF ARMED FORCES AND COOPERATION IN PEACEKEEPING

REFTELS: A. ASTANA 01422

[1](#)B. ASTANA 01478

[1](#)C. ASTANA 01366

[1](#)D. ASTANA 01450

[1](#)E. ASTANA 01541

[1](#)F. ASTANA 01770

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. Pamela L. Spratlen, 1.4 (b),
(d)

[1](#)1. (S/NF) SUMMARY: U.S.-Kazakhstani Bilateral Defense Consultations, held in Washington and Arizona November 16-18, discussed how to sustain and strengthen cooperative U.S.-Kazakhstani military-to-military engagement. Key topics during Kazakhstan's Deputy Minister of Defense Sembinov's meetings in the United States included Kazakhstan's continued support of the Northern Distribution Network, NATO-Partnership for Peace cooperation, and U.S.-assistance on Kazakhstan's armed forces modernization. High-level visits, including by CENTCOM Commander General Petraeus and NAVCENT Deputy Commander (refs A-B), generated continued Kazakhstani support for key U.S. strategic objectives in relation to Afghanistan, including the Northern Distribution Network, overflights, and deployment of Kazakhstani officers to ISAF headquarters in Kabul. Kazakhstan's newly appointed Minister of Defense, and other high-level Kazakhstani officials, thanked the U.S. government for its assistance in modernization of Kazakhstani armed forces, and requested continued support. END SUMMARY.

NOVEMBER DEFENSE CONSULTATIONS ENHANCE STRATEGIC COOPERATION

[1](#)2. (C) The cornerstone of U.S.-Kazakhstani high-level military engagement is the biennial or triennial Bilateral Defense Consultations (BDCs). Chaired by a U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary and Kazakhstani Deputy Minister, they review ongoing security cooperation and develop new programs to assist Kazakhstan in modernization of its armed forces. Previous Bilateral Defense Consultations -- held in Astana in 2008 -- developed the 2008-2012 military bilateral cooperation plan. During the November 16-18 Bilateral Defense Consultations, U.S. and Kazakhstani representatives discussed Kazakhstan's continued support of the Northern Distribution Network, NATO-Partnership for Peace cooperation, and U.S. assistance. Bilateral Defense Consultations have established a cooperative relationship between the U.S. Department of Defense and Kazakhstan's

Ministries of Defense and Emergency Situations. In addition, they contributed to Kazakhstan's five-year deployment of troops to Iraq and its support on overflights and the Northern Distribution Network (NDN).

SUPPORT FROM THE TOP ON AFGHANISTAN AND CLOSER ENGAGEMENT

13. (S/NF) The United States and Kazakhstan conduct over 100 military-to-military cooperation events annually -- from high-level visits to working-level exchanges. Visits by CENTCOM Commander General David Petraeus and NAVCENT Deputy Commander Thomas Cropper (refs A-B) led to continued Kazakhstani support for key U.S. strategic objectives related to Afghanistan, including the Northern Distribution Network, and overflights. Kazakhstan has offered the U.S. Government a new transit/logistics facility to complement the U.S. Transit Center at Manas in Kyrgyzstan and agreed to send staff officers to ISAF head-quarters in Kabul. To reprise our successful five-year military cooperation in Iraq, the Kazakhstani government also currently is considering the U.S. request for deployment of non-combatant explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) instructors for the Afghan training facility in Mazar-i-Sharif.

ENERGETIC AND PRAGMATIC DEFENSE MINISTER EMBRACES COOPERATION

14. (C) During his first meetings with U.S. officials following his June 24 appointment (refs A-C), Kazakhstan's Minister of Defense, Adilbek Dzhaksybekov, called bilateral military relations positive and expressed hope that relations would continue to develop "strategically." He said he wishes to expand U.S.-Kazakhstani cooperation as part of his plan to modernize the Kazakhstani armed forces. He also commented on Kazakhstan's "special relationships"

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with Russia and the United States, drawing on his personal experience as a former Ambassador to Russia and Head of the Presidential Administration. During his meetings with Petraeus and Cropper, Dzhaksybekov's behavior confirmed assessments of Post's Kazakhstani interlocutors that he is logical and pragmatic, carefully considers various positions, and actively pursues "best practices" to accomplish strategic goals (refs A-C). During the meetings, Kazakhstan's Minister of Defense was consistently relaxed and personable.

KAZAKHSTAN URGES INCREASED MARITIME COOPERATION

15. (C) On August 28, U.S. NAVCENT Deputy Commander Rear Admiral Thomas Cropper met General-Major Mazhitov, Deputy Director of Kazakhstan's Border Guard Service to discuss bilateral military cooperation (refs B-C). This first high-level military visit to focus entirely on naval cooperation helped to improve cooperation between the U.S. military and its Kazakhstani Navy and Coast Guard partners. Mazhitov and Komratov praised current cooperation and expressed interest in increasing bilateral activities to combat shared threats. Both interlocutors acknowledged similarities between the Caspian Sea and the Arabian Gulf that could make Kazakhstan's participation in a Combined Force event in Bahrain useful (refs B and D).

CONSTANT ENGAGEMENT: A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

16. (C) High-level bilateral events reinforce frequent and wide-ranging working-level engagement. In addition to the U.S.-Kazakhstani five-year military cooperation plan, the U.S. Department of Defense also signs yearly plans with the Kazakhstani Ministries of Defense and Emergency Situations, both of which actively cooperate in the arrangement of bilateral events. The 2010 plans include: invitation of Kazakhstani representatives for consultative talks at U.S. facilities, events related to development of Kazakhstan's peacekeeping brigade (KAZBRIG), and provision of training programs related to medical care, intelligence collection, humvee and helicopter maintenance, military policing, and aviation operations. To help land-locked Kazakhstan develop the naval capabilities essential to protect its offshore oil and gas resources, naval forces will also conduct training courses on small-boat maintenance and anti-terrorism operations. In support of Kazakhstan's conversion of its military from a conscription-based to

a professional organization, the United States and Kazakhstan will also conduct a series of education events, specifically including development of a Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) corps. In addition, CENTCOM is sponsoring several peace support workshops next year and a July 2010 regional cooperation exercise.

ASSISTANCE IMPROVES NON-PRO AND COUNTER-TERRORISM CAPABILITIES

¶7. (C) Military and security assistance programs, specifically 1206, Foreign Military Finance (FMF), and International Military Education and Training (IMET) funds, strengthened Kazakhstan's non-proliferation and counter-terrorism capabilities (refs E-F). By providing vehicles, boats, communications equipment, and training courses, military assistance enhanced Kazakhstan's capability to detect and respond to terrorist or trafficking activities on the Caspian Sea. Under the Global Peacekeeping Operations Initiative, the Department of Defense supplied a simulation center for training exercises and supported the English-language development of Kazakhstani military personnel. Similar projects are planned for next year based on slightly higher funding levels than fiscal year ¶2009.

KAZAKHSTAN PURSUES MULTI-VECTOR STRATEGY

¶8. (C) Kazakhstan maintains close military and security relationships with Russia and China. Kazakhstan actively participates in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) regional security organizations, which are generally seen as being led by Russia and China to balance NATO. At the same time, as part of a "multi-vector foreign policy," Kazakhstan also seeks active cooperation with

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Western military forces. It is the only former Soviet republic in Central Asia to conclude a formal Individual Partner Action Plan within the NATO Partnership for Peace Program. Although Kazakhstan has repeatedly announced that it has no intention of seeking to join NATO, it has also sought to play an active role in NATO's Partnership for Peace program by hosting a June NATO-Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council meeting in Astana.

STEPPE EAGLE EXERCISE PROMOTES COOPERATION AND INTER-OPERABILITY

¶9. (C) One of the most significant U.S.-Kazakhstani security engagements is the annual month-long Steppe Eagle exercise -- a multi-national training drill, conducted with Kazakhstani, U.S., and United Kingdom personnel, in order to equip and train a force able to participate in worldwide counter-terrorism and peacekeeping operations. During his speech at this year's Steppe Eagle opening exercise, the Ambassador underscored that Steppe Eagle develops cooperation critical to shared U.S.-Kazakhstani interests (septel). He reminded participants that members of the Kazakhstani military shared the field of battle with U.S. soldiers as comrades-in-arms in Iraq, and may soon do so again as part of the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. The Ambassador also emphasized that Steppe Eagle reflects the bilateral commitment to enhance our long-term military engagement. This year's Steppe Eagle -- the first exercise conducted with two battalions -- successfully developed participants' skills and showcased U.S.-provided equipment, including one Huey-II helicopter and several humvees, for a large number of Kazakhstani and international military officials.

KAZAKHSTAN HOSTS DISASTER RESPONSE EXERCISE

¶10. (C) In another instance of regional security-related cooperation, Kazakhstan also hosted the Zhetysu emergency disaster response exercise near Almaty in September (septel). Teams from Kazakhstan's Ministry of Emergency Situations, NATO, the United States, Turkey, Azerbaijan, and various other countries, demonstrated their potential response to a massive earthquake and associated catastrophes, including a landslide, toxic explosion, and fire in an apartment complex. Volunteers simulated the role of international assistance teams, UN and NGO workers, and the media in order to enable Kazakhstani authorities to gain experience managing a massive international disaster response effort. Overall, U.S. military observers concluded the exercise -- the largest international

disaster response exercise Kazakhstan ever conducted -- was successful. Ministry of Emergency Situations personnel demonstrated an eagerness to learn from other international participants, typical of their willingness to cooperate with the U.S. military on training events.

SPRATLEN